productivity of tea and not on increasing the planting areas in traditional areas. The development schemes of the Tea Board are oriented to this objective. Tea Board is also taking various quality control measures with a view to removing poor quality teas, which unnecessarily add to the increased tea production, but not to value.

At present, the tea prices have shown marked improvement over the prices prevailing in 2005. Government has set up a Price Stabilization Fund, the benefits of which are available *inter alia* to small tea growers having holdings up to 4 hectares, with the objective of providing financial relief to small growers when the prices of tea fall below a specified level.

Air-worthiness of Jaguar Fighters

*79. SHRI R.P. GOENKA:
SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that recently the Indian Air Force have raised doubts about the air-worthiness of the Jaguar deep penetration strike fighters, manufactured by the Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. and, reportedly, declined to fly the two Jaguars, delivered to the IAF recently at the Ambala airbase; and

(b) if so, the details of the operational/maintenance problems identified and steps being taken to rectify the snags?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) The Indian Air Force (IAF) has not raised any doubts on the air-worthiness of the Jaguar aircraft manufactured by Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. (HAL). The IAF did not decline to fly the two Jaguar aircraft recently ferried in by the IAF to the Ambala airbase.

(b) Does not arise in view of reply to part (a) above.